

**Opening Statement**  
**Chairman Ken Calvert (R-CA)**  
**Committee on Science**  
**U. S. House of Representatives**  
**February 16, 2006**  
***Posture Hearing: FY 2007 NASA Budget Request***

Mr. Chairman, I want to welcome both Administrator Mike Griffin and Deputy Administrator Shana Dale. Welcome back to the Science Committee, Shana! You and Mike will make a great team. You both know NASA; you both know Capitol Hill; and you both know all facets of the industry. The American people are lucky to have such a well-qualified Administrator and Deputy Administrator for NASA during this exciting and challenging time.

Last year, the Congress passed an authorization bill for NASA for the first time in 5 years. That process underscored the lack of funding which is the key factor blocking the Agency from realizing its highest potential in all of its core mission areas - space, aeronautics, and science.

Dr. Griffin alerted this Committee during the November 2005 hearing about what is now calculated to be a \$2.3 billion dollar shortfall in the NASA budget. As a result the Agency has had to move funding from science and from exploration into the Space Shuttle program. We understand that this shortfall is a result of miscalculations in costs for return-to-flight activities and operations for the shuttle through its retirement in 2010 – and exacerbated by the hurricane related costs. These miscalculations were not made on Dr. Griffin's watch, yet must be resolved.

Hurricane Katrina's destructive path through the Gulf Coast left NASA with \$760 million in damage to its Stennis Space Center and Michoud Assembly Facility. Recognizing the severity of this situation and its implications on the Agency's already strained budget, Members of this Committee urged the Administration and Appropriators to increase recovery funds for NASA in the December supplemental. While the \$349 million that was included in the final package was an increase from the President's request of \$325 million, the discrepancy only added more pinch to the already tight squeeze on the budget.

So this leaves us with the Fiscal Year 2007 budget request for NASA. The Agency did receive a 3.2% increase over the FY 2006 -- or a 1.5% increase when including Katrina funding in Fiscal Year 2006 -- it is not enough to fully fund all the sectors of the Agency as everyone on this dais would like to see them budgeted.

Dr. Griffin, I know that hard decisions have had to be made. The Agency has made some really difficult choices to keep the Exploration programs optimally funded so that our nation can move to a Crew Exploration Vehicle; to assure the safety of the Shuttle program; to meet the obligations of our agreements with the partners of the International Space Station; to have our Science programs working on an exciting, balanced program;

and to have our Aeronautics programs producing forward-looking research and technology that will keep our nation globally competitive.

I congratulate you on putting together a finely-tuned budget request. It is a much stronger budget than we have had in the past with the number of “placeholders” that we were given.

One of the areas that is critical for you to address – as I know you are aware – is to get NASA’s financial house in order. As I have mentioned before, as a businessman, if I tried to run a business without a credible accounting system, it would be a disaster waiting to happen. In all areas of your President’s Management Agenda ratings, NASA is flying high—except in the financial management area. I know that you have made improvements and have provided leadership in this area, but improvements must be shown as soon as possible.

Now that the NASA Authorization Act of 2005 has been signed into law, we look forward to working with you to get the information that we need to have more effective and productive oversight. With the Administration proposing its Competitiveness Initiative, I look forward to working with you to assure that NASA is contributing to this important national objective.

I know that the United States is beginning its long journey back to the Moon and then on to Mars through the Exploration program, but I worry that we are not taking these challenges from other nations seriously. The United States must maintain its global position.

We have heard that India is preparing for a lunar orbital mission in 2007; Japan plans to send a robotic rover to the Moon by 2013, and the European Space Agency has a probe that is orbiting the Moon. Although these countries are talking about sending people to the Moon, only two – the United States and China – have set dates for manned lunar landings. NASA is hoping to schedule its first manned mission in about 2018; China is heading for a landing as early as 2017.

While this is generally a lean budget year, we must maximize every penny to keep our great nation competitive. I look forward to hearing from you, Administrator Griffin and Deputy Administrator Dale, on your plans to move forward with the FY07 budget request for NASA.

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